

Faithful to the End

8.3.25

Malachi Series

Message 7

Malachi 4:1–6 (CSB)

4 “For look, the day is coming, burning like a furnace, when all the arrogant and everyone who commits wickedness will become stubble. The coming day will consume them,” says the Lord of Armies, “not leaving them root or branches. ² But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings, and you will go out and playfully jump like calves from the stall. ³ You will trample the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day I am preparing,” says the Lord of Armies.

⁴ “Remember the instruction of Moses my servant, the statutes and ordinances I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel. ⁵ Look, I am going to send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. ⁶ And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers. Otherwise, I will come and strike the land with a curse.”

1. Finish Lines and Promised Hope

A. Most of us can endure anything for a short period.

1. As long as the difficulty and pain is seen as a momentary, light affliction, we can usually hang on.

2. The promised day of the Lord is the ultimate finish line.

a. It is when Jesus returns from Heaven, and sets everything right.

b. When Jesus returns and wipes every tear from the righteous eye.

c. When Jesus returns the hearts of parents to the children and children to the parents.

d. When the grave gives up its prize, and the dead in Christ arise.

3. This is THE FINISH LINE for every believer.

B. The Prophets bore the responsibility of pointing to this culmination of human history.

1. For the wicked, the day they spoke of is a day of divine justice.

2. For the righteous, it is the ultimate celebration.

a. When those who have been trampled upon do the trampling.

b. When those who mourned now leap like calves.

c. When those who had been exposed to harshness of the wickedness are now sheltered in the shadow of wings of the most high.

2. The Day of the Lord is a two-sided coin.

A. There is a coming a day when every person will be judged.

1. The books of Heaven will be open, and everything laid bare.

2. On that day, the grave will give up those entrusted to its care.

3. Nothing will keep us from our appointed day where we stand before God.

B. This is both a great and a terrible day.

Illustration: with a coin.

1. Judgment for wicked

2. Joy for those who fear the Lord (repeat of earlier)

C. Notice the imagery for the Destruction of the wicked.

1. Burning like a furnace.

2. Everyone who commits wickedness becomes like stubble.

3. The day consumes them.

4. Their destruction is so complete that the righteous will trample them underfoot like ashes under the soles of the righteous' feet.

D. Does this make you uncomfortable?

1. I think it should!

2. It's almost like we have been inoculated to Hell.

3. Many of us might have a doctrine of eternal punishment, but not a belief.

4. The world loves this and has popularized hell and Satan to a place where he is nothing to fear or dread.

5. In fact, recently a well-known pastor¹ walked onto the platform at a large church.

a. As he walked up, he asked the worship band to play something they thought was appropriate, and they played: "Highway to Hell" by AC/DC.

b. The lyrics go like this:

Don't need reason
Don't need rhyme
Ain't nothin' that I'd rather do
Goin' down
Party time
My friends are gonna be there too

I'm on the highway to hell

Hey satan
Payin' my dues
Playin' in a rockin' band
Hey mumma
Look at me
I'm on the way to the promised land

6. Just let me be clear so no one misunderstands me:

1. This is NOT a song that believers and followers of Jesus should sing or enjoy.

¹ Clip of Perry Noble on YouTube

2. Songs like this make a mockery of Christ and the reality of eternal judgment.

7. Ezekiel 33:11 tells us that God does not delight in the death of the wicked, so why should we find joy in singing a song that mocks the eternal truth and reality of an eternity apart from God?

8. The reality is that many of us are comfortable or complacent toward the doctrine of eternal judgment.

1. We do not live or evangelize like we actually believe in eternal death.

2. Yet, Scripture is clear that the destination of the wicked, those who do not follow Jesus, is eternal destruction.

3. The finish line for the righteous looks completely different.

Malachi 4:2–3 (CSB)

²But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings, and you will go out and playfully jump like calves from the stall. ³You will trample the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day I am preparing,” says the LORD of Armies.

A. The imagery for the wicked is of an intense fire.

1. They are burned up.

2. Turned to ashes.

3. But notice the completely different imagery used for God’s righteous people.

B. Sun of Righteousness and Healing in its wings.

1. The KJV capitalizes “sun”, making it a reference to Jesus.

2. The other translations don’t.

3. Does this refer to Jesus? Maybe.

C. Capture the imagery God is using here first.

1. This pictures God with a bird like form with large wings outstretched.
2. The wings are so large that they block the sun and cast a shadow.
3. The shadow protects the one under from the fierce heat and fire of the sun.
4. Here are some other examples:

Psalm 17:8 (CSB)

⁸Protect me as the pupil of your eye;
hide me in the shadow of your wings

Psalm 36:7 (CSB)

⁷How priceless your faithful love is, God!
People take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

Psalm 57:1 (CSB)

¹Be gracious to me, God, be gracious to me,
for I take refuge in you.
I will seek refuge in the shadow of your wings
until danger passes.

Psalm 63:7 (CSB)

⁷because you are my helper;
I will rejoice in the shadow of your wings.

D. The wicked are exposed to the fierce fire of God's judgment.

1. The righteous are protected, overshadowed, by the shape and form of God.
2. Is this not what Jesus does for us?

3. Jesus shields us and covers us from the fierce anger and judgment of God upon the wicked.

- a. We are sheltered by Him, protected from wrath.
- b. It isn't the shape or shadow of the cross that covers us, but the form of Jesus!
- c. He casts such a huge shadow that while everyone else experiences the fire of God, His people rest in the shade.

E. More than resting in the shade, Malachi declares, "you shall go out leaping like calves."

- 1. Like a calf set free from its stall, with no care in the world, is the response of God's people to the Great Day of the Lord.
- 2. While the wicked are destroyed, the righteous leap, celebrate, and rest in the protection and covering of Jesus.
- 3. I cannot help but connect this promise at the end of the Old Testament with the promise found in the beginning:
 - a. The first Gospel in scripture is that the seed of the woman will trample and stomp the serpent's head.
 - b. Malachi sees us trampling and playing on the ashes of our enemy.

F. This promise of rest does not guarantee us an easy life.

- 1. We still encounter and endure the effects of sin in this world.
- 2. But child of God, fear not.
- 3. For though we endure for a little while, there is coming a day when we shall fear or worry no more.
- 4. A day of remarkable splendor and glory.
- 5. What a day that will be!

4. What are the signs of this day?

A. I will send you Elijah the prophet.

1. If you were Jewish, you would know that Elijah had already come and gone.
2. He was a real prophet, but didn't die, but was carried up with God without experiencing death.
3. Elijah's return, his second coming, was going to be one of the key signs of the Last Days.

B. Jesus said that John the Baptist was Elijah. Matt 11:14

1. That doesn't mean Elijah was reincarnated.
2. But John the Baptist did fulfill the mission and calling of Elijah.
3. He called for repentance and measured the sin of God's people against the righteous standard of God's word.
4. He confronted political leaders and paid the price.
5. Of course, this is very rich imagery, and I have questions.
 - a. When Jesus went to the Mount of Transfiguration, it was Moses and Elijah who met him.
 - b. Both are mentioned in our text.
 - c. In the very last moments of humanity, Two Witnesses will perform signs and wonders according to Revelation, and one of those is often understood to be Elijah.

5. Second sign: A revival within families.

Malachi 4:6 (CSB)

“And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers. Otherwise, I will come and strike the land with a curse.”

A. Notice the last word of the Old Testament!

1. The last word is “curse”.
2. If Elijah doesn’t come, if there isn’t something miraculous, then the Lord would have to strike the land with a curse.
3. BUT!!!!!!!
4. The Curse is not guaranteed.
 - a. It is a possibility.
 - b. But there is a divine remedy.

B. Elijah will turn the hearts of fathers and children.

1. The word turn is the OT term for repentance.²
2. Let me read something nerdy for a minute and to justify what I’m going to say.
3. One commentary quotes a guy named Baldwin.

Baldwin describes the ministry of the coming Elijah figure ‘in terms of bridging the generation gap’. The NIV renders: ‘Elijah will teach parents to love their children. He will also teach children how to honor their parents.’ The postscript refers not so much to family discord as to covenant renewal with YHWH—the ‘resolution of opposites’ in the sense of faithful ancestors versus faithless descendants, or vice versa.³

C. In the Last Days, there is a revival among families of the righteous.

1. Jesus pointed to the disruption in households because of Him.

Matthew 10:21–22 (CSB)

² Andrew E. Hill, *Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi: An Introduction and Commentary*, ed. David G. Firth, vol. 28, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Nottingham, England: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 366.

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²¹“Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rise up against parents and have them put to death. ²²You will be hated by everyone because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

Luke 12:51–53 (CSB)

⁵¹Do you think that I came here to bring peace on the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. ⁵²From now on, five in one household will be divided: three against two, and two against three.

⁵³**They will be divided, father against son,
son against father,
mother against daughter,
daughter against mother,
mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law,
and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”**

2. SCRIPTURE does not promise you that by serving Jesus your family will always be at peace.

3.What is God declaring in Malachi 4?

D. Think about this:

1. The parents, the fathers, and the priests had taught the younger generations that unacceptable sacrifices were acceptable.
2. They had permitted a standard which defaced the perfection of God.
3. The parents and priests taught their kids it was ok to leave your spouse for younger models as long as it made you happy.
4. The family, and the image of God in marriage, was defaced.
5. The fathers had stopped bringing the tithes and stopped telling the stories of God’s faithfulness in their past, their present, and their future.
6. They had stopped raising and training godly children.

7. But in the last days, there will be parents who love their children enough to teach them about the faithfulness of God, and there will be children who honor and love their parents and will listen and obey.

E. BUT IN THE LAST DAYS.... The hearts, the seat of emotion and decision, desire, and reason, will turn and repent toward the children.

1. And the children will turn, repent toward their parents.
2. And this will be one more picture of God's love for us.
3. The animal Sacrifices showed us God's love and faithfulness and the future promise of a Savior.
4. Marriage showed us God's love and faithfulness and the mystery of God's relationship to humanity.
5. Tithing models and demonstrates God's love and faithfulness to us and the world and symbolizes an earnest deposit of Jesus, the firstborn from the dead.
6. In the last days, the Family will again model God's love and faithfulness before the world and show the amazing grace that God, the faithful father, has for his wayward children.

6. Living a Life of Faithfulness.

A. God is faithful to His children.

1. Even though the people questioned and accused God, God was always faithful.
2. Even when they couldn't see God's faithfulness, it was there.
3. The difficulties of life can make it hard for us to see the hand of God in our life, but it is there.
 - a. God was in the exile moments.
 - b. God is in the valley of shadow of death moments.
 - c. God is in them all.
 - d. Even when we can't see it, God is working.

B. Malachi ends with God declaring His faithfulness until the end.

1. The sending of a messenger to declare God's power again.
2. Even the curse that the people deserve is prevented.

C. The question remains: Are you faithful?

1. How is your worship?
2. Do your most important relationships honor God and point others to Jesus?
3. Are you a faithful steward of what God has given you: Tithes, talents, and treasures?
4. Where are you struggling to see God's faithfulness?
5. Are there any obvious areas in your life where you know you are not faithful and honoring God?

Communion/Table: REMEMBER! Vs 4.

A. God tells Israel in Verse 4, "Remember."

1. Remember what God has said and promised.
2. Remember the statutes, the law, the covenant.

B. What did Jesus tell His followers?

1. Paul said it like this:

1 Corinthians 11:24–25 (CSB)

²⁴ and when he had given thanks, broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

²⁵ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

C. Christians, we are to remember and think upon Jesus, His faithfulness, and His power.

1. Remember Jesus, the Living Word, the Word who became flesh, who gave of that flesh for us to meditate upon and consider.

2. Remember ME!!!!

3. Today, we are receiving the Lord's Supper before we worship with music and then tithes and offerings.

D. When we think about what Jesus has done, and meditate upon His grace and mercy expressed through suffering:

1. If any sin comes to mind, do not wait but confess, repent, and let Jesus forgive you of your sins.

2. If any wound or pain comes to mind, ask Jesus to heal you and believe that He is faithful, just, and able to heal.

3. If there is any area of unfaithfulness in you toward your wife or kids, please do not hesitate to get right with God and with them.

4. If God shows you that you have been unfaithful with the talent, the time, or the tithe, ask God to help you to get right and to live faithfully.

Table

Worship

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